1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
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names are also willed, but since their value depends on the goods expended to validate them, there is seldom bitterness about their allotment. Indeed, a chief who is the legal owner of a designation which came from above in the beginning of time, will in many cases choose to elevate his position with respect to a title of comparatively recent date. But if any person who is not a member of the ancestral family should dare to use an ancestral name, all the members rise to avenge the theft, for such they feel it to be. In recent years, however, this practice has become comparatively common. In such cases a man, eager to share in the glories of a myth and able to give a potlatch, has validated an ancestral name to which he has no right. The presence of the white man alone restrains the injured ancestral family. Names are sometimes lent or hired to those who are not members of the group for definite sums; the recipient recompenses the individual. If such names are not returned for several generations quarrels are apt to arise since the recipient claims to be the real owner and not the temporary possessor. During his tenancy of the name he is entitled to any prerogative attached to it, but he is not considered a *bona fide* member of the ancestral family.

Instances have occurred in which an old man or woman, believing himself to be the last survivor of an ancestral family, has donated his names and myth to those who have befriended him, or these have been taken by those who buried him. Some individuals are constantly watching to conduct the funerals of friendless old people in the hope of so obtaining names. But in almost every case this leads to friction, since it is virtually impossible for an ancestral family to die out. Perhaps in the next generation, perhaps in the following one, some youth will claim descent from the first ancestors of the supposedly defunct family, and claim the myth and names embodied therein. This leads to a feud with the person, or his descendants, who has received the names through aid given to the "last" of the family.

Such instances of an ancestral family becoming practically

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423 614 [773] [226] sumed that ten is the largest number of traps possible at that weir. Those who have the right to that weir are the members of the ancestral family with the names of those first users. At this point the logic of the Bella Coola fails to uphold the mythological pattern. No salmon-weir has remained in existence since the beginning of time; when one broke, owners were sometimes infants, and those who repaired the break became regarded as the rightful possessors. The system of ownership prevailing at the time of abandoning the weirs, was that *individuals*, not groups, had rights to certain sections of the weir [428] which were willable like other personal property. In most [431] cases this right was transmitted with a name, marking the section of weir, which had to be duly validated by presents. [428] In other cases, the intangible ownership was willed without any mark whatever.[6] Unless bequeathed in this way, disputes were frequent. Rights of this kind were never sold although [427] an owner often leased his section for a night, or longer period, [431] receiving goods in return, and not forfeiting his ownership thereby. This was particularly common when the renter was planning to give a potlatch. No case was heard of in which the right to a certain section of salmon-weir was given to a non-member of the ancestral family. Theoretically, this was possible, but practically it would be so inconvenient that it is most unlikely ever to have occurred, since the Bella Coola is [671] never such a slave to legal privileges that he fails to be guided by common sense.

226 [423] [577] [626] Although individual ownership is thus recognized with regard to sections of salmon-weirs and suitable places for olachen-nets, the owner is bound to share his haul. When he catches a large number of fish, anyone, whether related to him or not, can demand some. He cannot refuse, since to do so would brand him as selfish. The effective check on this system

[128] [6] Great difficulty was experienced in learning about the distribution of rights to sections of salmon-weirs. The evidence is conflicting, and though every effort was made to verify and check the above, there may be further regulations which were not learnt.